

Hosting a Healing Prayer Event

PURSUING GOD'S PRESENCE - Small Group Resource

As a small group, hosting a healing prayer event is one way to pursue God's healing presence together. It is a great way to conclude a time of fasting as a small group but can be done as a stand-alone event.

Healing prayer is about glorifying Jesus! "A great portion of Christ's time was dedicated to healing the sick. He healed all kinds of people: the blind, the paralyzed, the lame, the deaf, lepers, those who had fevers, and many with chronic illnesses." [1] Christ's healing ministry has continued throughout the church age and Scripture testifies to our continued role in this (James 5:15, 1 Corinthians 11:29-32, John 14:12).

Biblical Framework for Healing

Suffering leads us to ask hard questions and often exposes or challenges our view about God and good and evil. Here are some key concepts that you can share with your group:

- Illness, disease, genetic defects and frailty are some of the many evidences of the fall (Genesis 3).
- The Bible teaches us that Jesus healed the sick and raised people from the dead and that by His sacrifice on the cross, healing is available to us (Isaiah 53:5).
- The Bible also teaches that Jesus' followers will be able to heal others as well (John 14:12-14).
- Many people whom Jesus healed had sought Him out and humbled themselves before Him (Mark 2:4, 5:27).
- Sometimes, Jesus instructed people to take action in order to be healed (John 5:8) and other times Jesus healed them out of His own initiative and compassion (Matthew 14:14).
- Both Paul and Timothy were not completely healed of their physical issues even though they had faith and lived righteously. God is glorified in healing us but also in our waiting during times of suffering (2 Corinthians 4:17-5:1).

We can trust God's heart towards us even if we don't know His plans. As we listen to the Holy Spirit, we seek to discern, "Is today the day He will heal?"

- Prayer, faith, humility, obedience, trust and community are all connected to healing. Forgiveness, repentance and deliverance can also be factors that affect our health and physical well-being if the sickness is associated with a spiritual or emotional root. "Is there anything that is hindering me from receiving healing today?" is another great question to ask the Holy Spirit.
- Pain and suffering are a struggle for us to understand – our hearts were created to long for something better (Ecclesiastes 3:11). None of us are exempt from suffering and each of us will have to choose how we will respond to God's sovereignty in it (Job 1:21, Revelation 21:4, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:8-10).
- As believers, we await God's full restoration where there will be no more pain, sorrow or suffering (Revelation 21 -22)!

- What does healing prayer or divine healing mean to you?
- Have you ever asked God for healing? Why or why not?
- Have you ever experienced or witnessed divine healing?
- Have you ever prayed for someone else to be healed? What was the result? How did the person respond to their healing or the absence of it?
- How can we as a small group bring God's healing to our world? What does it look like for us to pursue Christ as Healer?



Small Group Dialogue

Footnotes:

[1] <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/healer>

Steps for Hosting a Healing Prayer Small Group Event

A. Prior to the Healing Prayer Night – Setting the Stage

- Is there anything that you are being prompted by the Holy Spirit to do to prepare as a leader or host? This may include fasting, doing a prayer walk around the property, playing worship music in your meeting space, and/or praying for those who will attend, etc.
- How can you empower your group members to exercise their spiritual gifts in preparation of, during, or in follow-up to this event? For example, for those in your group who excel in hospitality, mercy/compassion or serving, what ideas do they have to make participants feel welcome and comfortable?
- The “Preparing for Healing Prayer” handout should be given to the participants requesting healing about a week before the healing prayer night.
- Spend time praying through the meeting space beforehand to invite the Holy Spirit’s presence.
- Encourage each of your small group members to prayerfully prepare for the event.

B. Facilitating the Healing Prayer Night

Welcome/Instructions

- Pain and suffering can be exhausting and leave us feeling vulnerable, miserable and out of sync with our community and/or God. Providing a warm and comforting welcome plays an important role in opening people’s hearts to God and each other.
- Let your guests know a general overview of what you have planned for the sequence of events (ex. worship, communion, prayer).
- Sample opening prayer to commit this time to Jesus:

Dear Heavenly Father, we commit this time to You and pray for Your protection and guidance. Please lead us in Your truth and love. We welcome Your presence and acknowledge Your goodness and grace to us. In the name of Jesus, we pray against all evil/unclean spirits that may want to interfere in what Jesus has planned for us here. Jesus, we thank You for Your victory on the cross and the healing You have for us by Your blood. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Worship

- Worship can include music, testimonies of God's provision, healing, protection, etc., or be the reading of Scripture. For more ideas, see the *Shepherding Worship – Small Group Resource*.

Confession & Repentance

- You can invite people to spend some time in confession between them and the Lord to address anything that may be hindering them from hearing, experiencing or moving forward in faith in Jesus.
 - Is there anything for which I need to confess or repent?
 - Is there anyone I need to forgive?
 - Is there anything that I am doing or failing to do that I know God has asked me to address?
 - What lies am I believing about God, myself or others?
 - Are there any vows or judgments I've made that I need to renounce?
- 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

Communion

- If you would like to include communion as part of your healing prayer event, please remember that communion is reserved for those who have surrendered their life to Christ. For guidelines on how to facilitate communion, refer to the *Communion – Small Group Resource*.

Healing Prayer

- Ask the person seeking healing to briefly share what's going on in his/her life.
- Ask them, "How can we pray for you today?" "What would you like prayer for tonight?" Listen to what they are expressing and affirm their desire to seek God. Confirm that they would like prayer for healing without making promises about what God is going to do.
- Be respectful of their dignity and their vulnerability. Reassure them of God's interest in them. Ask them if they prefer to sit or stand. Let them know that they can ask questions or stop you at any time. Be sure to ask permission before you begin, and throughout the process as needed.

- Listen to the Holy Spirit as you pray and follow His leading. Be attentive to what others are also discerning for this person.
- Pray for healing – this may be for a total/immediate healing, an improvement in their condition or for a partial healing/relief of pain.
- Ask God to heal their spirit, soul and body. God may want you to include emotional or relational healing in your prayers for physical healing.
- Ask God to redeem their suffering, that His good would come from it, instead of their suffering keeping them trapped in futility.
- Pray for God’s strength, presence and protection for them.
- Pray that God would help them see His glory, give them an eternal perspective, filling them with His hope, peace and joy.
- Pray that they would encounter God’s love for them in a new/deeper way.
- Be aware of referred pain or other ways that God is revealing any spiritual roots of their ailment. You may be led to pray repentance, forgiveness and/or deliverance types of prayers with them.
- Pray against any enemy forces at work. Command anything of the kingdom of darkness to go in Jesus’ name. For additional information, read the *Spiritual Warfare Quick Reference Guide – Small Group Resource* and *Our Authority in Christ – Small Group Resource*.
- Ask God to cleanse them by His blood and fill them with His Spirit.
- Ask God to release His blessings to them.

Using Anointing Oil

- Anointing is a biblical practice that was used to set someone or something apart as holy, dedicated for God’s purposes. It was also used for healing purposes (James 5:14-15).
- You can purchase anointing oil from a Christian retailer or use household olive oil. You can pray a blessing prayer over the oil to dedicate it as holy to God.
- Anointing the back of a person’s hand is the least intrusive spot to anoint someone.
- To anoint someone:
 - Give a brief explanation and ask their permission.
 - Dab a bit of oil on your finger, then use that finger to make a cross symbol on the other person’s hand. As you do this, pray, “I anoint you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.”

Using the 'Laying of Hands' in Prayer

- Jesus often used touch when He healed (Mark 6:5, 7:32, 8:22-25; Luke 13:13).
We see this practice continue with the early church in Acts for healing, blessing and to commission leaders.
- The laying of hands is a powerful and personal way to bless someone and minister to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. Here are some guidelines to follow:
 - Explain your intentions and ask permission before you lay hands or touch someone.
 - The tops of the shoulders or upper back are the least intrusive place to lightly lay hands. For other areas like the head or feet, you can extend your hands out towards the person instead of making physical contact.
 - Be alert and wise with any age, gender or relational boundaries that need to be respected.

Blessing Prayer

- Conclude your healing prayer time with a blessing, asking God to bless each of you and seal the work He is doing in your lives. Give thanks to Him for His goodness, grace and mercy.

Additional Leader Resources

- "Pursuing God for Healing" Sermon, Pastor Barry Regier, August 25, 2019 (<https://heartland.libsyn.com/pursuing-god-for-healing>)
- "ACTS: Empowered to Heal" Sermon, Pastor Wade Gardiner, April 26, 2015 (<https://heartland.libsyn.com/empowered-to-heal>)
- <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/healer>
- Communion - Small Group Resource
- Debriefing Small Group Activities - Small Group Resource
- How to Shepherd Worship - Small Group Resource

Preparing for Healing Prayer Participant Handout

If you would like prayer for healing at the Healing Prayer Night, please prepare yourself by working through the following questions:

- For what specifically are you seeking healing? How would you describe the root of the issue – is it spiritual, physical, emotional, relational or psychological in nature?

- How has this situation affected your relationship with God? How have you seen Him at work in this?

- Are there lifestyle or relational changes that God wants you to make that could enhance or improve your health? Unconfessed sin, living in continual disobedience and unforgiveness could hinder your healing. Please meditate on the following Scriptures for guidance and clarity:
 - Romans 12:1-2
 - 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1
 - James 5:14-16
 - 1 Peter 3:7
 - 1 Corinthians 7:3-4
 - Matthew 5:21-24
 - Colossians 3:1-11
 - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

- Ask God to reveal any areas of sin or unforgiveness that you need to address. Are you willing to deal with these things? Take time to confess, repent and forgive accordingly.

- Consider your willingness to surrender to God's plan for your life in this situation. How will you honour, praise and pursue Him if you are healed? How will you honour, praise and pursue Him if you are not?

